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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PARM](#) [IAEA](#) [EG](#) [IR](#) [IS](#) [KNNP](#)  
SUBJECT: EGYPTIANS WELCOME U.S. WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE IRAN  
ON NUCLEAR TALKS

REF: STATE 87682

Classified by ECPO Counselor John Desrocher for reasons  
1.4(b) and (d).

11. (U) Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit issued a statement June 1 welcoming reftel announcement and calling for the creation of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction. The full text of the statement follows.

Begin text:

Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit welcomed the statement by the U.S. Secretary of State about Iran's right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy as well as the U.S. willingness to join the EU3 negotiations on the Iranian nuclear file. The Minister emphasized that negotiations and dialogue should have the support of the international community to reach a settlement that is satisfactory to all sides and returns the Iranian nuclear file to the IAEA, which can fulfill its role in accordance with its authorities on the one hand, and Iran's commitments as a signatory to the NPT on the other hand.

Aboul Gheit also emphasized the importance of avoiding confrontations and the threats of sanctions, as it is never a successful way to reach a peaceful settlement in any conflict. The Minister explained that Egypt continues to call for a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction and for all countries in the Middle East to sign the NPT and clear the region of nuclear weapons according to the resolutions of the NPT conferences and the UN General Assembly.

Aboul Gheit added that the Iranian nuclear file and its surrounding developments receive the utmost Egyptian attention because Egypt is convinced of the need to settle this issue through negotiations and of the need for mutual flexibility to reach an acceptable peaceful resolution that preempts confrontation.

End text.

12. (C) Post also shared the gist of reftel with Arab League Cabinet Chief of Staff Hisham Youssef June 1 and provided copies of Secretary Rice's public statements on the development. Responding to emboff's request for the League to publicly welcome the move, and to publicly press Iran to end its nuclear program, Youssef said the League certainly welcomed the news of Washington's willingness to engage with Tehran. Noting that Secretary General Moussa was currently in China for an Arab-Chinese summit, Youssef promised to convey the USG message and encourage him to make positive public pronouncements on the issue.  
JONES